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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/025,289	12/19/2001	Andrew K. Martin	SC11522TS	1877

23125 7590 08/21/2003

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AUSTIN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
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EXAMINER
THOMPSON, ANNETTE M

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2825	

DATE MAILED: 08/21/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/025,289	Applicant(s) MARTIN ET AL.
	Examiner A. M. Thompson	Art Unit 2825

-- Th MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cov r she t with the correspond nce address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *19 December 2001* .

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-26* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-26* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☒ The drawing(s) filed on *19 December 2001* is/are: a)☒ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2 .
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

This application 10/025,289, has been examined. Claims 1-26 are pending.

Claim Objections

1. Claims 9, and 16 are objected to because of the following informalities: The scope of the phrase "in part" is indeterminable and therefore should be deleted. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Rejection of claims 1-18 and 21-25

3. Claims 1-18 and 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Martin et al. (Martin), U.S. Patent 6,378,112. Martin discloses a method of verification of design blocks and a method of equivalence checking of multiple design views.

The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in

the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

4. Pursuant to claim 1, Martin teaches a verification system (see Abstract) comprising a representation of a first design representing a specification having a predetermined functionality (Fig. 2, #202); a representation of a second design, the representation of the second design intended to satisfy the predetermined functionality of the first design (Fig. 2, #204) , the verification system functioning to affirm that the representation of the second design satisfies the predetermined functionality of the representation of the first design (col. 2, ll. 15-29) ; a plurality of design inputs (Fig. 1, #122, #124); a tester for comparing the representation of the second design with the representation of the first design (Fig. 2, #210) and detecting when the representation of the second design does not satisfy the representation of the first design (Fig. 2, #214), the tester providing a failure indicator and a characterization of a failure in response to the detecting, the tester further comprising a failure analyzer for applying one or more constraints to the characterization of the failure, the one or more constraints representing restrictions on permissible test parameters of the second design representation, and determining whether the one or more constraints will prevent the failure from occurring (col. 6, ll. 11-11).

5. Pursuant to claim 2, wherein the verification system affirms that the second design is functionally equivalent to the first design (col. 3, ll. 22-26).

6. Pursuant to claims 3 -5, wherein one of the first design or the second design is an RTL representation and the other is a gate level representation or one of the first or

the second design is an RTL representation and the other is a transistor level representation or the representation of the first design and the representation of the second design are two different representations of a same design (col. 2, ll. 14-43).

7. Pursuant to claim 6, wherein the constraints are supplied as design inputs (Fig. 2, col. 2, ll. 15-29).

8. Pursuant to claim 7, wherein the constraints are supplied by a user of the verification system (Claim 8, claim 15).

9. Pursuant to claim 8, wherein the constraints originate from the tester (the symbolic assertion generation module, col. 2, line 63 to col. 3, line 31).

10. Pursuant to claim 9, wherein the first and second designs represent a portion of an integrated circuit design that is less that all of the integrated circuit design. . .(Fig. 2, #200 cols. 2-3).

11. Pursuant to claim 10, wherein the one or more constraints further comprise a set of constraints and an order in which the set of constraints is applied is dependent upon the characterization of the failure (col. 5, ll. 41-67).

12. Pursuant to claim 11, wherein not every constraint is applied to the characterization of the failure ((col. 5, ll. 41-67).

13. Pursuant to claim 12, wherein the one or more constraints are generated by any of the following comprising creation of cutpoints in the representation of the first and second designs; input signals external to the first and second design representations; or state-holding elements contained within the representation of the first design and second design (col. 3, line 32 to col. 4, line 20).

14. Pursuant to claim 13, a method of verifying functional similarity (see Abstract) between a first design and a second design intended to satisfy functionality of the first design, comprising receiving a representation of the first design (Fig. 2, #202); receiving a representation of the second design (Fig. 2, #204); receiving a plurality of design inputs (Fig. 1, #122, #124); executing a test program on a computer that compares the representation of the second design with the representation of the first design, and detecting when the representation of the second design does not satisfy the representation of the first design (Fig. 2, #210), the test program providing a failure indicator and a characterization of a failure in response to the detecting (Fig. 2, #214), the test program further comprising applying one or more constraints to the characterization of the failure, the one or more constraints representing restrictions on permissible test parameters of the second design representation, and analyzing the failure by determining whether the one or more constraints will prevent the failure from occurring (col. 6, ll. 11-11).

15. Pursuant to claim 14, further comprising affirming that the second design is fully functionally equivalent to the first design (col. 3, ll. 22-26).

16. Pursuant to claim 15, further comprising obtaining the one or more constraints that are applied to the characterization of the failure as a portion of the plurality of design inputs that are received failure (col. 5, ll. 41-67).

17. Pursuant to claim 16 further comprising permitting another design separate from the first design and the second design to determine the one or more constraints .(Fig. 2, #200 cols. 2-3).

18. Pursuant to claim 17, wherein a set of constraint is created and predetermined one of the sets of constraints are applied depending upon the characteriation of the failure (col. 5, ll. 41-67).

19. Pursuant to claim 18, further comprising generating the one or more constraints by having constraints associated with cutpoints created in the representation of the first and second designs; input signals external to the first and second design representations; or state-holding elements contained within the representation of the first design and second design (col. 3, line 32 to col. 4, line 20).

20. Pursuant to claim 21, this independent claim incorporates the limitations already rejected in claim 1, supra, and additionally includes the limitation of a symbolic stimulus generator that analyses the representation of the first design to determine a set of inputs to a test point and generates a set of symbolic stimulus to be applied to corresponding test point inputs in the representation of the second design. Martin discloses this limitations at Fig. 2, #210; col. 2, line 63 to col. 3, line 67). Therefore claim 21 is likewise rejected.

21. Pursuant to claim 22 and 25, wherein the finding of additional inputs corresponding to additional nodes comprises tracing from an output-to- input direction through the representation of the first design to identify the additional inputs (col. 5, ll. 27-67).

22. Pursuant to claim 23, wherein the corresponding inputs in the representation of the second design do not structurally exist but functional correspondence exists (col. 2, ll. 15-43).

23. Pursuant to claim 24, this independent claim incorporates the limitations already rejected in claim 1, supra, and additionally includes the limitation of a symbolic stimulus generator that analyses the representation of the first design to determine a set of inputs to a test point and generates a set of symbolic stimulus to be applied to corresponding test point inputs in the representation of the second design. . .. Martin discloses these additional limitations at Fig. 2, #210; col. 2, line 63 to col. 3, line 67. Therefore claim 24 is likewise rejected.

24. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Rejection of claims 19, 20 and 26

25. Claims 19, 20, and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Pixley et al., U.S. Patent 5,754,454. Pixley discloses a method for determining functional equivalence between design models.

26. Pursuant to claim 19, Pixley discloses a computer readable storage medium, for storing a verification system (claim 27; col. 8, 29-32) comprising a set of instruction that executes receiving a representation of a first design. . . (Fig. 1); receiving a representation of a second design. . . (Fig. 1); receiving a plurality of inputs (col. 3, ll. 12-17); comparing the first and second design representations. . .(col. 2, ll. 35-57) . .applying one or more constraints to the characterization of the failure. . .(col. 5, ll. 38-65).

27. Pursuant to claim 20 further comprising maintaining the one or more constraints in a list that is applied in an order based upon the failure characterization (col. 6, ll. 5-64).

28. Pursuant to claim 26, this independent claim incorporates the limitations already rejected by claim 19 and further includes the limitation of a symbolic stimulus generator also disclosed by Pixley (the BDD creations, col. 2, ll. 35-57). Therefore, claim 26 is likewise rejected.

Conclusion

29. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Please reference the PTO-892 for a complete listing.

30. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to A.M. Thompson whose telephone number is (703) 305-7441. The Examiner can usually be reached Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.. If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, Matthew S. Smith, can be reached on (703) 308-1323.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956 or the Customer Service Center whose telephone number is (703) 306-3329.

31. Responses to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

or faxed to:

(703) 872-9306, (for all **OFFICIAL** communications intended for entry)

Hand-delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Plaza 4, 2021 South Clark Place, Arlington, VA., Fourth Floor (Receptionist).

A. M. THOMPSON
Patent Examiner